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ABSTRACT

The historical lack of involvement by large universities in the social problems of the communities in which they reside has reached a critical stage. No other institution, in terms of human resources and facilities, is better equipped to come to grips with community problems than our urban universities. Private urban universities can no longer afford to be aloof from their urban setting but must work with the community in bringing about positive social change and providing educational opportunities to all segments of the community. (Author)

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A PRIVATE URBAN UNIVERSITY RESPONDS TO THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

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A few years ago the Michigan State Board of Education made a policy statement on equal opportunity in higher education in Michigan. A part of this statement reads:

> Michigan's institutions of higher education have a unique role to play in furthering equality of educational opportunity. These institutions have been and are continuing to be a vital force in shaping our society. As good as the record has been to date, more remains to be done, especially if the disadvantaged portion of our population is to be prepared to seize the opportunities that are available for those with the knowledge and skills offered by institutions of higher education.
>
> At a time when demand for higher education is placing a strain upon our existing institutions we must not lose sight of the problem facing disadvantaged young men and young women as they aspire to obtain higher education. [1]

In effect, the State of Michigan has charged its institutions of higher learning, whether they are public or private, urban or rural, to become cognizant of their responsibility in providing equal educational opportunities for all segments of the population. To be

[1] This policy statement was part of the material given to participants in a higher education seminar sponsored by the State of Michigan, Civil Rights Commission, and State Board of Education held on December 3, 1968 at Eastern Michigan University.

HE 002 666

sure the right to equal educational opportunities guaranteed by the Michigan Constitution does not make such rights in fact. Both public and private institutions must be totally committed to this belief and must recognize the worth and positive potential of all human beings if these rights are to be realized.

It is easy to focus upon our public institutions and charge them with the task of providing educational opportunities for everyone, particularly the so-called disadvantaged because these institutions are supported by public funds. Perhaps too many private institutions have adopted such a philosophy and thus continue in their traditional manner of taking care of their own to the exclusion of those who suffer from the deprivations created by an unjust society. The fact remains that public supported institutions should not be expected to do it alone; private institutions have no less a responsibility than the public institutions. Arnstein (1970) points out that Universities are basically middle-class institutions that serve students from middle-class families. He explicates, "It is not necessarily reprehensible to take care of your own... but it probably is not compatible with the egalitarian opportunities of which we speak so often and so rhetorically (Arnstein, 1970, p. 56)." Arnstein (1970) also views with some suspicion certain practices which provide subsidies for higher education on the grounds that it operates in the public interest.

Private institutions in Michigan, as across the nation, have felt the full impact of rising costs and are experiencing financial difficulties. Notwithstanding these plaguing financial problems, private urban universities still must respond to the cries of desperation in the community and meet the educational needs of individuals who are succumbing to dehumanizing conditions brought about by social decay. In short, private urban universities can no longer continue along institutional racism lines and remain viable institutions in an urban setting.

Inner City of Detroit

The inner-city environment is the incubator of many of the social problems existing in our cities today. Moynihan, Reisman and others have documented the generally loose family structure and the often chaotic conditions of this type of home environment. This description could apply to Detroit's inner-city. Children born into such an environment are often forced to identify with adults who are themselves defeated, apathetic, and non-productive members of our society. Many of these students from their early years are constantly bombarded with visual examples of either immoral or asocial adult behavior. By means of the mass communication media, these students at very early ages come to know that their life style is both different from and atypical of that of the mainstream of

American society. Because of social, economic, and racial discrimination, they begin to feel inferior, worthless, and rejected. A feeling of hopelessness and despair engulfs them and depresses their self-concept to such a degree that many have in effect given up before the completion of the primary grades. Many children of Detroit's inner-city undergo this experience.

Indeed, Detroit's black population conforms to the description Vontress (1970) gives of the plight of Ameria's 19 million blacks who have been robbed of their traditions and pride in the past and assigned a secondary status.

The public school system, as the social institution charged with the responsibility of producing socially productive citizens, has been ineffective in counteracting the social and psychological effects of the inner-city environment. Nor has the school system been effective in providing students with the skills and knowledge necessary for rising above the environment into which they were born. Piper (1970) notes the impact of social and economic changes on the Detroit Public Schools as she quotes from the Administrative staff of the Detroit Public Schools, Report on School Problems and Needs, January, 1966:

> Change in the population of Detroit has created areas where the majority of children have extraordinary needs which the public schools are not equipped to meet. Where once the city population was typically stratified, the majority of upper and middle income urbanites have moved to newer areas in the suburbs or to outer rings of the city. The population that remains in the older sections is predominately unskilled or semi-skilled low income racial and ethnic minorities. When

> representatives of other strata moved out, the vacuum was filled by Southern Appalachian whites and Southern Negro immigrants similar in many ways to the low-income minority groups who have remained in the inner city.

As in many large public school systems, the counselors in the Detroit Public Schools system are burdened with many administrative, clerical, and programming responsibilities. They do not, therefore, seem to have the opportunity to provide crucially necessary vocational and educational counseling. The majority of inner-city students obviously have not been made aware of the educational and vocational opportunities available.

By far, the majority of Michigan's black citizens live in Detroit and surrounding areas. Since this is true, the assumption is made that statistics concerning blacks in higher education in Michigan reflect accurately the black population of Detroit. In the Michigan Civil Rights Commission publication "Vocational Preparation and Race in Michigan Higher Education (1970)": it states that

> An indicator of the position of Negroes in higher education is the population enrollment comparison. Negro students were under-represented in the college population when compared with their total population. In 1966 it was estimated that both the total Negro population in the State and the Negro college-age population (18 to 21 years) was approximately 9%, while the study shows that only 4% of the college population was Negro. In other words, there were proportionately $4\frac{1}{4}$ times as many Negroes in the population and the prime college-age group as were reported to be enrolled in Michigan colleges and universities.

> When we compare the survey data with the 1960 Census of Population we find virtually no change has occurred in the relative position of the white and Negro college students in higher education since the beginning of the decade.[p. 8]

This report further points out that the 1960 U. S. Census of Population reported 95% students enrolled in higher education in Michigan were white and the proportionate balance mainly Negro. This report also states that Negro students were concentrated in fewer Michigan institutions of higher learning than white students.

The need for the University of Detroit to respond to the problems stated above is multidiminsional as it is with all public and private urban colleges and universities.

The University of Detroit: A Private Urban Institution

How does a private urban university respond to the educational needs of the community? The University of Detroit will be used as a model in illustrating how one private urban university responded, in part, through the creation of an Office of Special Projects.

The University of Detroit is located on an attractive eighty acre site in the northwest section of the city in a residential area. In recent years, this neighborhood has undergone a rapid change created by the movement of its white middle-class residents to the suburbs and the influx of blacks from various parts of the city. The neighborhood represents a cross-section of the black community in terms of its socio-economic strata. The majority of the remaining

whites live in an integrated exclusive section of the neighborhood.

The University has always been an urban institution and has served the metropolitan area, especially through its graduates, two-thirds of whom live and work here. In the 1970 Report of the President, University of Detroit, President Malcolm Carron, S. J. states:

> In the last few years, our efforts to serve the community have become more conscious and more intense. Simply stating that we want a stronger urban commitment does not do the job. A university cannot stop its job of teaching and research to tackle social problems full-time and still remain a university. But there can be a commitment to link the educational process to problems of the real world in such a way that both educational and social ends are served. This is what we have tried to do. [4]

The University of Detroit's involvement in the area of education for disadvantaged youth began six years ago when three Jesuit seminarians who were at the University during the summer term felt that it would be a worthwhile venture to provide academic tutoring for a few neighborhood high school students on an informal basis. The response to these efforts was of such a positive nature that this activity continued the following summer on a more formal basis. The University's department of Community Relations incorporated the program into its own commitment and secured funds for the continuation and expansion of the program. These early experimental projects become the basis for a high school level year-round compensatory program called "Aim High." The Aim High program provided the basis for establishing and awareness of the need for such activities, not only on the high school level but also on the college

level.

Office of Special Projects
University of Detroit

The earlier Aim High efforts led to the creation of the Special Projects Office on April 15, 1968 as part of the University's continuing effort to meet its urban commitment toward the peaceful solution of some of Detroit's educational and social problems. The Office of Special Projects is presently operating ten projects and programs designed to meet specific educational and social needs of the low income minority group population of Detroit's inner-city. A brief description of these programs and the needs they serve follow:

Project One Hundred

Project One Hundred is a four year college level program designed to identify 100 inner-city public and parochial high school graduates each year. These students have high academic potential but for financial and/or achievement reasons would otherwise be unable to attend the University of Detroit or other institutions of higher learning. The unique feature of the program, distinguishing it from "high risk" programs conducted by other universities, is that Project One Hundred provides more than admission with financial assistance. The overall orientation of the Project is designed to provide not only the financial assistance but also the academic and counseling assistance so desperately needed by these students to greatly increase the probability of their being graduated from the University of Detroit within a four-year period.

The socio-economic conditions existing in the inner-city of Detroit tend to discourage high school graduates from attending colleges and universities. Poverty and other negative environmental factors have psychological repercussions which are most devastating to the disadvantaged student; and these same factors often prevent many such students from even considering attendance at college. The goals and objectives of Project One Hundred are designed to come to grips with these psychological and educational problems.

The Project One Hundred program begins with a six-week summer orientation program providing an opportunity for students to earn up to six hours of college credits. Students are enrolled in regular college classes as well as special study seminars. The purpose of the study seminars is to enrich the instructional level of the class and to provide the students with additional enrichment material as well as any remedial or assignment assistance.

Students in the program also receive extensive counseling and guidance, both in individual sessions and group sessions.

Project One Hundred students are enrolled as regular full-time University of Detroit freshmen to begin their first academic term year. A supportive staff of academic supervisors, counselors, tutors, and study center coordinators are employed to assist the students through the academic year.

Project One Hundred is privately funded; however, most students are also eligible to receive state and federal financial

aid.

Project Fifty BA

Project Fifty BA is a program instituted by the University of Detroit to adequately prepare significant numbers of minority group students for managerial positions by means of a four-year degree program in its College of Business and Administration. The Project selects fifty inner-city high school students who could profit from a college education but who may be inadmissible to the University of Detroit for academic or financial reasons or both. Fifty BA students are recruited primarily from the Detroit area.

The program begins with a six-week summer program of preparation and orientation experience for the students, similar to that of Project One Hundred. They take two courses, carring college credits: English and Accounting. Tutoring and counseling services are available, not only during the summer program but also during the academic year during which a supportive staff continues to assist students in their pursuit of a Business degree. In addition to the academic assistance, students involved in Project Fifty BA receive financial assistance to the extent of the individual's need.

Project Fifty BA is privately funded. Students in this program are also eligible for state and federal financial grants and loans

ICOP

The Independent Colleges Opportunity Program is sponsored

by the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Michgan (AICUM) with the basic goal of providing opportunities for a college education on the campuses of the member schools for students throughout the state from disadvantaged situations who can benefit from but are not otherwise able to obtain a college education. The program not only recognizes as potential candidates those students with excellent academic records from disadvantaged situations, but focuses on students whose past records are not exceptional. The teachers and counselors of these students have shown an interest, initiative, or motivation to acquire a college education and have the latent ability to achieve one.

The program begins with a summer orientation program that is integrated into the Project One Hundred summer program. The Kellogg Foundation underwrites the cost of the summer program. Students are assigned to member colleges and universities for their four year educational commitment. The institution is committed to meeting the students financial need through existing financial aid avenues including state and federal grants and loans. Although AICUM has discontinued the program, the institution still remains commited to the students already in the program.

Career Opportunity Program

The Detroit Public Schools is the prime contract or for the Career Opportunities Program (C. O. P.) funded under Part D of the Education Professions Development Act of 1967 for school service assistants residing within the attendance areas of the Model

Neighborhood Schools.

The primary purpose of the C.O.P. program in Detroit is to foster increased levels of employment for adults and paraprofessionals and increased involvement of community persons in school community affairs. It will also help to raise levels of academic achievement for adults and children by providing a more relevant school curriculum, recruit more men for careers and education in related human service areas, and improve the self-concept of community persons and their children.

All candidates recommended by the Detroit Public School System and the Career Opportunities Program Council are accepted into the University of Detroit's program. These candidates are accepted for one, two, or three year training periods, depending upon the individual candidate's desire and accomplishments. A one year certificate, a two year associate degree and a three year undergraduate specialist certificate will be granted by the University of Detroit upon the completion of 30, 60. or 90 semester hours respectively.

The program is designed so as to provide in-depth training in the area of demonstrated deficiencies of inner-city students. The training received at the University of Detroit will provide each trainee with a specific body of knowledge that will have practical application and impact upon the educational problems during the transactional interaction between paraprofessionals and the students they serve.

Aim High Program

The Aim High Program is intended for those high ability, low achieving high school students whose family income is too great to qualify them for admission into the Upward Bound Program.

The Aim High Program consists of a non-residential six-week summer program followed by a four day per week academic year program. Students are carefully selected in terms of academic need, and are drawn from both public and parochial high schools in the city of Detroit. The summer program consists of remedial instruction in academic subjects; personal, vocational and educational counseling; and experimental enrichment activities. The academic year program reinforces the learning of the summer program through provisions for the same type of activities. Students are required to attend the Aim High Center on a four hour per week basis during the academic year. The Aim High Program accommodates approximately 70 students. This program is funded by the University of Detroit.

College Opportunity Program

The College Opportunity program is designed to provide remedial support, instructional assistance, academic stimulation, and personal, educational, and vocational counseling for selected eligible students so that the student will qualify for special University programs upon graduation. All students enrolled in the College Opportunity Program are accepted in to the Project One Hundred Program if they wish to attend the University of Detroit following

their graduation from high school.

The College Opportunity Program identifies 90 students in Class A and Class B Detroit Public High Schools who are desirous of obtaining a college education, but who for academic and financial reasons would otherwise be unable to attend college. These students are enrolled in a six-week summer program preceding their senior year in high school. They also participate in a 39-week academic year program during their senior year in high school.

The academic year program (39 weeks) is designed to continue the efforts of the concentrated six-week summer session in which incoming twelfth graders have been initiated. Guidance and counseling remedial classes in English, math and sciences are held at the University for the students selected to participate in the program. The College Opportunity Program is sponsored by the Detroit Public Schools and the University of Detroit.

Pre-Professional Project

The Pre-Professional Project is designed for disadvantaged low-income minority group students. The Project identifies high school seniors who have ability and an interest in pursuing a medical career. These students are brought into the Aim High Program for the purpose of remedial and enrichment instruction in the sciences and mathematics. The program consists of a full day, six-week summer session and a five evening per week academic year program with specific remedial instruction in the areas of biology, chemistry,

physics, and mathematics. Upon graduation from high school, the students enter the college level Project One Hundred program but remain identified as Pre-Professional Project students. They are provided with special tutorial assistances, counseling and experiences to facilitate ultimately their admission into a medical school.

Upward Bound

Although Upward Bound is a Wayne State University, College of Education sponsored project, the University of Detroit and Mercy College work in consortia with Wayne State in this sponsorship. This federally funded project is designed to motivate high ability, low achieving, inner-city high school students whose family income falls within the legal, federally defined definition of poverty.

The University of Detroit provides summer residence hall accommodations for all the male students in the Upward Bound Program, and enrolls those Upward Bound students who graduate from high school in June into regular college courses and provides the classroom facilities for special enrichment instruction throughout the summer. The University also provides space and facilities for an ensuing academic year program for the Upward Bound students.

National Summer Youth Sports Program

The National Summer Youth Sports Program combines federal funds with collegiate resources to provide an inspiring challenge for the educational and athletic leaders of the nation to give sports training and competition opportunities to the nation's youth on an unprecedented scale, making available expert instruc-

tion and leadership, competent supervision, and desirable facilities for many young people who are unable to secure this important experience through their own means. The objectives of the program are to provide opportunity for sports skills instruction and competition and to help young people learn good health habits. The program runs five weeks, four days per week, with five hours of actively per day. The content of the program includes mass participation of boys and girls in a variety of sports, an educational component stressing good nutrition, sound personal habits, and positive attitudes and better understanding of study career opportunities in modern America.

Lunch and transportation are provided for the 400 youths selected to participate in this program. This program is operated in conjunction with the Mayor's Committee for Human Resources Development.

Special Dental School Support Program

The Special Dental School Support Program is designed to identify black students aspiring to become dentists who have adequate college preparation and academic potential to successfully complete a dental program. Because of financial and/or achievement reasons these students would experience difficulty in gaining admission into the University of Detroit School of Dentistry.

Special Projects assists aspirants in making application to the School of Dentistry and application for financial aid. Special

Projects further assists the School of Dentistry in the selection of students who will be admitted. Special Projects works closely with the Wolverine Dental Association in providing academic support for the students when they enter the program.

The University of Detroit's concern for the urban environment is not only extended through its Special Projects Office, but is woven into practically every area of the University's programs and curricula as evidenced by more than a dozen other community service projects.

SUMMARY

The historical lack of involvement by large universities in the social problems of the communities in which they reside has reached a critical stage. No other institution, in terms of human resources and facilities, is better equipped to come to grips with community problems than our urban universities. Private urban universities can no longer afford to be aloof from their urban setting but must work with the community in bringing about positive social change and providing educational opportunities to all segments of the community.

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